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ABSTRACT

This document summarizes a civics course for primary schools in Poland, grades 6-8. The curriculum was developed as part of the Education for Democratic Citizenship in Poland Project, a cooperative effort of the Polish Ministry of National Education and the Mershon Center, The Ohio State University (United States). The project aims to help schools and teachers educate succeeding generations of Polish youth to be active, competent citizens committed to democratic values. The curriculum includes over 80 detailed lesson plans. The document is divided into two sections. The first consists of unit and lesson titles, and lesson abstracts. The second part is made up of sample lessons. The curriculum has five units: (1) local government, which includes fighting unemployment, different interest groups, water, garbage, influencing decisions, day care, budget decisions, neighborhood, local campaigns and elections, problem solving and responsibilities of local government; (2) principles of democracy including majority decisions, decision risks versus non-decision, compromise, conflicting values, everyday democratic principles, freedom of speech and artistic expression, democracy vs. dictatorship vs. anarchy, nation vs. state, and patriotism vs. nationalism; (3) human rights and freedom, including what they are and who is entitled to them, basic documents, children's rights, extra-governmental protection of human rights, rights of ethnic minorities, citizen responsibilities, and Amnesty International; (4) institutions of the democratic state; (5) citizen participation and public opinion; (6) free market economy; and (7) Poland, Europe, world, and current problems. (DK)

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ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Materials from

LIFE IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY:

A Primary School Civics Course for Poland

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Life in a Democratic Society:

A Primary School Civics Course for Poland

This is a translation from Polish to English summarizing a civics course for primary schools in Poland, grades 6-8. The curriculum was developed as part of the *Education for Democratic Citizenship in Poland* Project, a cooperative effort of the Polish Ministry of National Education and the Mershon Center, The Ohio State University. The Project aims to help schools and teachers educate succeeding generations of Polish youth to be active, competent citizens committed to democratic values. The curriculum represented by this summary builds upon a primary school curriculum guideline developed in Poland with the assistance of Mershon Center consultants and with funding from the National Endowment for Democracy.

The curriculum includes over 80 detailed lesson plans, many of which were developed by a team of eight Polish educators in residence at the Mershon Center from September, 1992 - February, 1993. During their visit, the educators reviewed educational materials and participated in a comprehensive series of workshops and field trips. Upon their return to Poland, the Polish team continued to refine the curriculum with the assistance of Mershon Center consultants and Polish scholars.

Introduced at an *International Conference on Education for Democracy* in Warsaw, December 10-12, the curriculum will undergo field testing and further revision in 1994. The final product will serve as a model to other nations struggling with the task of educational reform.

The Mershon Center congratulates its Polish friends on their dedication to this curriculum. It represents an important step in the process of creating a democratic Polish Republic.

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UNIT AND LESSON TITLES, LESSON ABSTRACTS

UNIT I - LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1. Fighting unemployment at the level of local government

   This lesson focuses on the ways of dealing with unemployment at the level of local government, and especially on active forms of preempting the occurrence of this phenomenon. In the course of this lesson students will have a chance to consider pro and cons associated with the controversy concerning a public works project.

2. Different interest groups in towns and cities

   Different groups of citizens with different needs, expectations, and, therefore, interests can be distinguished in any town or city. Their existence constitutes a completely natural and widespread phenomenon. Differences of interests do not have to lead to sharp conflicts. Conflicts can be solved by means of negotiations.

3. Who needs a local government?

   Citizens in democratic societies have a right to make decisions concerning problems that are close to them. This lesson allows students to recognize the effectiveness of this form of civic participation using student government and local government as points of focus.

4. Water - is it only a local problem?

   Provision and distribution of water are some of the responsibilities of the local government. This lesson shows how this responsibility is carried out and underscores the importance of global aspects of water management.

5. Garbage - a local or a global problem?

   In the course of this lesson, students learn the problems associated with refuse storage and utilization. As a result, they come to appreciate the problem's extra-local character and are encouraged to think of the ways of dealing with the problem effectively.

6. How can citizens influence the decisions of local authorities?

   Citizens can influence the decisions of local authorities by writing letters and signing petitions addressed to their elected representatives, meeting with their representatives, participating in referenda, and more drastic forms of influence including picketing, rallies, and demonstrations.

7. Should day care facilities in Mokotow be closed down?

   The problems associated with day care facilities in Mokotow help students to track the process of decision making by their local representatives in a clearly conflictual situation. The conflict between the members of the local council and mothers of young children stems from a drastic shortage of funds at the local government's disposal.

8. How the local council makes budget decisions

   Drafting the town's/city's budget is one of the most important responsibilities of the local government. This example is used to illustrate how the local government makes decisions.

The lesson demonstrates the scope of responsibilities and influence of different committees as well as members of the council.

9. My neighborhood, my town

In the course of this lesson, the local government is presented as a territory composed of close and familiar places, rather than an abstract administrative unit.

10. Elections to local council and its tasks

During this lesson, students learn about the different branches of the local government, the scope of their powers, and how the local government is elected.

11. Electoral campaigns at the local level

The lesson focuses on campaigns targeting the local government. It explains the significance of electoral campaigns and ways of designing them.

12. What responsibilities does the local government have?

In the course of the lesson, students get acquainted with the responsibilities of the local government and evaluate how well their own local government takes care of these responsibilities.

13. What problems can one have solved by the local government?

Citizens can have a lot of problems solved by the offices of their local government. The lesson familiarizes students with the types of problems they can have the local government solve and describes how the local government goes about doing so.

UNIT II - THE PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRACY

1. Majority decisions - are they always right?

Majority power and respect for minority rights are the primary principles on which democratic societies rest. This means that the preferences of a majority of citizens are decisive, but no majority decision can infringe on the rights and freedoms of people who are in the minority. Respect for minority rights is good for everyone as any citizen can on occasion find herself/himself in the minority.

2. Risks associated with making a decision versus costs associated with non-decision

Making a political decision (similar to any other decision) comes with responsibility for its consequences. In a democratic system, the burden of decision-making falls directly or indirectly on the shoulders of voters; failing to vote does not mean that one will avoid the consequences of decisions made by the government.

3. What is a compromise and how is it reached?

Conflicting interests of different social and political groups can clash in a democratic society. This does not lead to anarchy, however, when, among other things, the commonly accepted decision-making procedures are accepted.

4. Can democratic values conflict?

Freedom and equality are two primary democratic values. Sometimes protection of one of these values can only be accomplished at the cost of the other. The development of a democracy depends, to a large extent, on ways in which such conflictual situations are handled.

5. Democratic principles in everyday life

Years of communist rule demonstrate that whether or not a country is a democratic one is determined not by declarations (even constitutional), but by actual respect for democratic principles in the everyday lives of the country and its citizens.

6. Freedom of speech and young people's music

The lesson helps students to recognize the possibility of a conflict of values which comes as part and parcel of a democratic system. What limits can be placed on the freedom of speech? Should any limits be imposed on the right to artistic expression? This problem is considered on the basis of a hypothetical conflict between "parents" and "rock musicians."

7. Democracy vs. dictatorship vs. anarchy

Governmental systems differ, among other things, with respect to where power resides and the mechanisms of decision-making. Determining what these differences entail and distinguishing pros and cons of different ways of governing, dictatorship, and anarchy, and especially democracy, are some of the questions to which students will be asked to seek answers.

8. Nation vs. state

One of the most significant manifestations of people's collective life is the existence of a national identity based on language, territorial, and cultural ties. The lesson enables the students to learn what factors comprise a nation and what relationships exist between the nation and the state.

9. Patriotism vs. nationalism

What does it mean to be a Pole? What is the difference between a patriot and a nationalist? After all, both claim that they love their country and are looking out for its well-being. The lesson gives students an opportunity to consider both of these concepts.

UNIT III - HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

1. Human rights - what are they and who is entitled to them?

In the course of this lesson students learn the basic rights and freedoms to which all people are entitled. In addition, they will be asked to think about the kinds of activities that would be necessarily undertaken in a democratic society so that human rights can, in fact, be respected. Finally, they learn about they ways in which citizens can stand up for their rights.

2. History of human rights - basic documents

The lesson demonstrates how the contemporary conception of human rights came into being. It was only toward the end of the 18th century that, for the first time, the concept of equal rights for all people was accepted in some countries. With the passage of time, international human rights documents started surfacing, and in addition to citizenship rights, they started including economic, social, cultural, and even ethnic minority rights. In the contemporary era, human rights are protected by national laws and international law as well as numerous governmental and extra-governmental organizations.

3. Individual and political rights and freedoms - who is entitled to them and who can abridge them?

At first, only individual and political rights were written into documents of national and international law. However, many of those rights are being systematically abridged by dozens of countries. This lesson should make students aware of the rights people have and the ways in which the government ought to ensure the conditions conducive to the application of these rights.

4. What rights do children have?

Everybody is entitled to various rights and freedoms, and that includes the children. The General Assembly of the United Nations Organization has ratified the Children's Rights Charter, a document containing the basic rights of children. Poland has also ratified this charter.

5. What extra-governmental organizations protect human rights?

In the course of this lesson students should learn how extra-governmental and human rights and freedoms organizations operate. Can they effectively confront violations of human rights? What are the principles, goals, and operating procedures of such extra-governmental organizations?

6. Rights of ethnic minorities

Students will learn the rights of ethnic minorities in the course of this lesson. A discussion about legal regulations and everyday attitudes towards ethnic minorities should take place. Breaking down stereotypes and tolerance should be two primary themes of this lesson.

7. What responsibilities do citizens have?

In addition to having rights, people also have certain civic responsibilities. The following are some of the basic civic responsibilities: loyalalty to one's country; defense of one's country; respect for the law; payment of taxes and other forms of government revenue.

8. How does Amnesty International operate?

This lesson will help acquaint students with the operating procedures of Amnesty International - a nonpartisan international human rights organization. In addition, they should learn that human rights violations can be effectively confronted even in those countries which are notorious for abridging them.

UNIT IV - INSTITUTIONS OF THE DEMOCRATIC STATE

1. About the authorities and their rights

   The topic of the lesson is the concept of authority and the differentiation between legal and illegal authority. Students will learn about the consequences of different scopes of governmental power (too large or too limited), the interdependence between the government's power and citizens' expectations, and the desirable characteristics people in authority should possess.

2. Who makes important national decisions in Poland, and how?

   Who governs in Poland? What institutions are responsible for governing? What rights do they possess? How are decisions of national importance made? These are some of the questions to which students should seek answers in the course of this lesson. In addition, they should become acquainted with the basic powers and decision-making processes of legislative and executive branches of government. Using a Sejm law as an example, students should analyze the process through which national decisions are made.

3. The basics of parliamentary elections and parliamentary decision-making

   Whether or not a given political system is democratic partially depends on the scope of the parliament's powers (passing the most important laws, controlling the government), openness of parliamentary elections, and mechanisms of political conflict internal to the parliament. In the course of this lesson students should learn the basics of parliamentary elections and parliamentary decision-making.

4. The president and the bureaucracy (the executive branch)

   The president and the bureaucracy compose the executive branch in the Polish Republic. They are accountable to voters for their decisions and, in the periods between elections, they are accountable to the legislative branch. The Sejm supervises the President and the bureaucracy.

5. Who governs here - the President or the Parliament?

   The ways of governing in democratic societies can be described by focusing on the comparative roles of the president and the parliament in influencing the nature of the country's public life. Depending on whether the president or the parliament is dominant, one refers to presidential or parliamentary systems. There is a mixed presidential-parliamentary system in place in most democratic countries. After the downfall of communism in Poland, there has been a lively controversy with respect to which type of governing system to adopt.

6. Public administration in Poland

   Public administration is a system of agencies put in place to take care of the country's business. Each agency has a right to make decisions in a particular area and at a particular level. This lesson deals with the scope of authority of different governmental agencies and their mutual interdependence.

7. The history of a bill, or who can influence the contents of laws?

A bill is a proposed law which can be passed by the Sejm and by which all people need to abide. The final shape of the law is determined not only by the Sejm, but also by the Senate and the President, as well as by the mass media, social organizations, political parties, the church, and public opinion.

8. Who needs the law and why?

Legal norms hold a place of particular importance among various norms regulating social life. They are written by governmental agencies and carry the force of law which everybody has to obey. This lesson illustrates the basic principles underlying the legal doctrine in a democratic society. It also demonstrates legal regulations.

9. Law protection agencies

Independent courts are one of the backbones of democracy. Ordinary citizens usually deal with general courts which rule on various civil and criminal issues. In addition to the general courts, the constitution allows for various special courts whose task is to oversee the government's actions and its conformance to the existing laws and the Constitution. They are: the Constitutional Tribunal, The State Tribunal, the Main Administrative Court, and the Highest Control Chamber. There is also the office of the Citizenship Rights Advocate who oversees various individual rights and freedoms.

10. Criminal and civil process

The judicial process is used to arrive at the truth in an objective manner; this is particularly important in controversies involving various legal subjects. Among other things, the courts are supposed to stand up for citizens' rights in the face of abuse of power by the government or unfair accusations from other citizens or the government.

11. Different aspects of the government

Political systems of different countries differ primarily in their exercise of authority and in their economic systems. On the basis of the first criterion, countries can be classified as democratic, authoritarian, or totalitarian. Based on the latter criterion, countries can be described as free market economies or centralized economies.

12. Tripartite division of power in a democratic society

A democratic political system is based on three mutually balancing authorities: legislative, executive, and judicial. The law is supposed to regulate the actions of the government. It protects individuals from arbitrary government and the society from arbitrary on the part of individuals.

13. The role of the nation's constitution

The basics of most democratic countries' political systems are outlined in their constitutions. Those constitutions regulate the functioning of countries' highest authorities and enumerate individual rights and freedoms. In the course of this lesson, students will learn about the concepts of "constitution" and "constitutionalism" and the system of constitutional rights protection currently in place in Poland.

14. Polish democratic traditions

Theories of contemporary democracy make references to democratic models from antiquity, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance period, the Enlightenment period, and the 19th century. This heritage also includes Polish traditions of citizen participation in the country's public life and citizens' use of various civic rights and freedoms.

15. Poles' civic attitudes in the 20th century

During the times of the 2nd Polish Republic, during the German occupation, and after WWII, Poles formed many associations, organizations, unions, and other formal civic groups. They were prepared to work toward the creation of a political and economic system as well to fight external enemies and a political system that was being imposed on Polish society. Democracy thrives not only because of legal regulations and the activities of the government, courts, and the bureaucracy, but also because of active citizen participants and their attitudes, including negative attitudes toward undemocratic authorities.

UNIT V - CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND PUBLIC OPINION

1. Biases in communication

News and interpretations of events which people get through the mass media tend to be biased, incomplete, or completely incorrect. This lesson teaches students how to receive the news critically, how to evaluate its correctness, and how to distinguish news from commentary.

2. How do citizens participate in public life?

Active citizen participation in public life constitutes the basis of democracy. It can occur at various levels of government through one-shot and long-term activities in support of government activity and in various forms of protest. Each form of participation - if within the confines of the law - is better for a democratic society than citizen passivity.

3. Public opinion

Public opinion exerts a great influence on government decisions in a democratic society. In the course of this lesson, students learn the concept of public opinion as well as the main factors shaping people's private opinions which, in turn, form public opinion.

4. Surveys of public opinion

Surveys of public opinion are designed to find out what people think, what drives their behavior, and how they behave in particular situations. However, results of public opinion polls do not always accurately reflect reality. Survey researchers make mistakes and affect survey results through the wording of questions. On occasion, respondents do not provide answers corresponding to their true attitudes. The lesson aims to help students understand what a well-designed survey is all about.

5. How and why are organizations formed?

Freedom of association is a right of all citizens in a democratic society. Any group of adult citizens can form an association as long as its purpose and activity do not violate the existing laws.

6. How can citizens object to governmental decisions?

There are many ways in which public opinion can be expressed. Some of those expressions of public opinion are commonly accepted in a society whereas others can be more controversial. In the course of this lesson, students learn about various ways of influencing governmental decisions thought of as inappropriate.

7. Should we vote in elections?

Voting in elections in a democratic society constitutes the most important civic activity and is one way to fulfill the ideal of popular rule. Every citizen casting a vote in elections influences the future shape of the nation, and at the same time, his/her own life. People do not always realize the significance of this act and, therefore, do not vote. What kinds of consequences can non-voting have?

8. Political parties in Poland

Political parties are organizations whose aim is to control the country's political life because they set out to gain and maintain power. Parties differ in their views on the country's social, political, and economic problems. During this lesson, students become acquainted with the Polish party system and compare it with party systems in selected countries.

9. The role of labor unions

The lesson deals with the activity of labor unions and their role in defending workers' rights. In the course of this lesson, students learn that a conflict between workers and the employer can end with a mutually beneficial agreement.

10. The mass media and democracy

Mass media are often viewed as one of the pillars of democracy. In addition to their basic function, which is to inform society, the media can shape public opinion and increase opportunities for keeping the government and other social institutions in check. Mass media in democratic societies can be completely independent or affiliated with political parties, the government, or other organizations. Pluralism inherent in the mass media makes it possible for people to receive complete and objective information.

11. The role of mass media in an electoral campaign

The way in which the parties and their candidate present themselves in the mass media can have a great impact on election outcomes. The mass media present an opportunity, though not the only one, for effectively influencing potential voters. It should be remembered, however, that election campaigns can affect the decisions of only a portion of the electorate, as many citizens have their minds made up long in advance of the campaign.

12. Selective information choice in the mass media
(the gatekeeping function?)

On the issue of shaping public opinion by the mass media, what is important is not only how the news is communicated but, more importantly, what news is selected for reporting. This lesson should help students realize that the information they receive in the printed press, radio, or TV has been selected from a much larger pool of information.

13. Advertising - information or persuasion

Advertising is a form of influence on public opinion. Well-known for years in the west, advertising has appeared in Poland only recently, together with other aspects of free market economy, and has fast become one of the natural components of social and economic life. Adored by some, and criticized by others, commercials influence not only the sales of advertised products but also societal lifestyle.

UNIT VI - FREE MARKET ECONOMY

1. Why can't we have everything?

The lesson familiarizes students with a basic economic problem: the lack of an equilibrium between people's economic needs and opportunities for satisfying them.

2. About choices and lost opportunities

The lesson makes students aware of the constant necessity of making economic choices in daily life. It, in addition, is designed to teach them how to evaluate the costs associated with making a given choice by analyzing costs of other, lost opportunities.

3. What is a cyclical flow of goods, services, and payments in an economy?

In the course of this lesson, students study simplified charts depicting cyclical flow of goods, payments, and services. They learn about the ways in which decisions of individual households and businesses determine the total expenditures, revenues, and levels of production of goods and services in an economic system.

4. On production and distribution - what, how, and for whom?

Scarcity of goods, services, and raw capital make it necessary for society to confront the basic question of what, how, and for whom to produce.

5. The law of supply and demand, or where do prices come from?

This lesson focuses on the operation of a free market economy. It seeks to familiarize students with the basic market mechanisms and to demonstrate the ways in which the law of supply and demand determines prices and effects the quantity of goods and services consumed.

6. What factors influence changes in supply and demand?

During this lesson students receive a closer look into free market mechanisms and learn about main factors influencing changes in supply and demand. They also learn how the behavior of individual and collective consumers and producers creates market dynamics.

7. What is money used for?

The lesson explains why people rely on money as a form of exchange. It also discusses the issues connected with the direct exchange of goods and services (barter) and explains different functions and types of money.

8. What do banks do?

The lesson deals with the role of banks in an economy. Students learn about the most important bank operations, including: giving credit, accepting savings, and maintaining various accounting procedures.

9. A national budget: revenues and outlays

During this lesson, students learn how the national budget is constructed, including the use of revenue and outlays. They also learn how the aims of the government's economic policies affect the final shape of the budget.

10. Why do we have to pay taxes?

The lesson makes students aware that taxes are the main source of the country's revenue. It is designed to help students understand the necessity of paying taxes and to convince them that taxes are returned to them in the form of (for example) social services.

11. What is inflation and how does it arise?

Inflation is one of the basic problems of contemporary economies all over the world. In the course of this lesson, students learn about the causes of inflation and about the consequences for individual households and businesses.

12. Unemployment - where does it originate and how can we fight it?

Unemployment - in addition to inflation - constitutes the basic problem of contemporary economy, not only in Poland, but all over the world. In the course of this lesson, students become familiar with the roots of this phenomenon and different ways of fighting it.

13. How to seek employment

The lesson familiarizes students with problems of the job market and discusses different ways of dealing with those problems in order to increase one's chances of finding employment.

14. We are starting our own business

The lesson is designed to help students become aware of the realities of economic life. A game on starting a business helps them realize that it is necessary to take into account many factors when making economic decisions.

15. Pirated musical tapes as an example of the "shadow economy" in the Polish economy

A transitional period between a centrally directed economy and a free market economy invites economic activity which violates existing regulations or takes advantage of the absence of necessary legal regulations. One example of this phenomenon is the market for pirated audiotapes. The problem has reached such enormous proportions that (for example) the American government has threatened restrictions on trade with Poland, and some artists refuse to give concerts in countries where their copyrights are not protected. In the course of this lesson, students become acquainted with the essence of this problem and consider some ethical aspects of economic activity.

UNIT VII - POLAND, EUROPE, WORLD: CURRENT PROBLEMS

1. The fall of communism in Eastern and Central European countries

   1989 was one of the most important years in post-WWII history. First in Poland, and then in other countries of Eastern and Central European countries, the communist system crumbled. The main purpose of this lesson is to discuss the nature of East-West relations before the "autumn of the people" and the causes of communism's downfall.

2. A united Europe? - main propositions of the Maastricht Treaty

   Students will learn about the positive and negative sides of the process of creating a United Europe, issues important for all countries in Central Europe. The opposition of Denmark to the Maastricht treaty and other issues connected with this are analyzed.

3. The United Nations Organization

   Do we need an international organization such as the United Nations Organization? What should its goals be and can it be effective? Students will learn the circumstances under which the United Nations Organization came into existence and how this organization operates.

4. International market

   A large proportion of goods and services produced in different countries is meant for foreign consumers. A significant percentage of investments comes from foreign capital. All countries participate in foreign exchange, the exporting and importing of different goods, services, and capital, and the labor force. What is the scope and operation of the international market? These are some of the questions to which students will seek answers in the course of this lesson.

5. Rich countries - poor countries

   In the wake of a weakened conflict between the communist East and the capitalist West, tensions between the wealthy North and the poor South continue to exist. Students will become familiar with the viewpoints of developed and underdeveloped countries.

6. How to generate energy in Poland?

   Each country should have its own energy program, because the operation of the economy is dependent on continuous provision of energy. Different ways of producing energy have positive and negative aspects; they should always, however, be appropriate for the realities of a given country. In the course of this lesson, students will consider the future of the energy industry in Poland.

7. Energy problems in my immediate environment

   It is the students' task - during the lesson and advance preparations - to think critically and practically about energy usage in their immediate environment. They should ask themselves how energy can be used more effeciently and, more importantly, why it is not being used properly.

8. Primary types of environmental pollution

The earth's ecological situation has resulted from poorly planned human activity. Environmental pollution occurs at an alarming rate, and people do not object to this problem intensely and effectively enough.

9. Dealing with environmental pollution in Poland

Poland and the rest of the world are confronted with the following dilemma - to eliminate those factories which pollute the environment or to let them remain in existence and risk various ecological problems. Based on the example of a cement factory in Chelm, students will realize how difficult it is to make decisions concerning the environment and to consider their consequences.

SAMPLE LESSONS

UNIT II: Majority decisions - are they always right?

Abstract: Majority power and respect for minority rights are the primary principles on which democratic societies rest. This means that the preferences of a majority of citizens are decisive, but no majority decision can infringe on the rights and freedoms of people who are in the minority. Respect for minority rights is good for everyone as any citizen can on occasion find herself/himself in the minority.

Goals

After going through this lesson students should:

- be able to outline the limitations on majority power in the face of respecting minority rights and why they should be respected

- be able to enumerate the basic ways of acting in a situation where the decision made by the majority has been incorrect

- be able to point to the consequences of giving up on the democratic procedure in the face of the "majority error"

Educational aids

1. A reading entitled "A Story about the Victory of Long Hair"

2. A reading called "Limited or Unlimited Rights"

3. An exercise called "Reasonable minority in the face of the majority's mistake"

Proposed lesson plan

Introduction

Write the following opinions on the board and ask students which of them would be close to various democratic theorists:

a. As long as I obey the laws, I cannot be persecuted by the authorities

b. I dress as I like and eat what I want

c. I raise my children in a religion which I think is right

d. Unjustly humiliated, for instance by the neighbors or the boss at work, I seek protection with national institutions

e. The authorities are always right and we should obey them no matter what

f. I always change my opinions after each election so that I do not upset the victorious majority.

After students have had an opportunity to express their opinions, ask them if the majority principle guarantees respect for particular individuals' rights.

Read the story about the victory of long hair (supplementary materials #1). Discuss with students the motives which drove the behavior of legislators in Szamponia, paying particular attention to elements of rational thinking and consideration of the majority's interests reflected in their activities. Underscore the fact that all the decisions were made democratically - in spite of this, however, many people who did nothing wrong were seriously hurt. Pose the question of what limitations should exist on the decisions made by democratically elected authorities (justifiable individual and group rights).

Discuss with students examples of rights whose protection is the responsibility of the majoritarian authorities. Do not create, however, an expanded range of such rights, but only limit

the discussion to a few examples (the topic of human rights will be discussed on a different day). Discussing the following rights would seem to be particularly worthwhile: the right to life, right of expression, right to take advantage of one's political rights, and freedom of conscience. Remind students that the basic human rights are codified in the constitution. Pose the question of whether the inclusion of legislation concerning the protection of human dignity in Szamponia's constitution would have altered the course of events in that country? Emphasize the point that mere inclusion of human rights and freedoms in the constitution is not sufficient - provisions need to be made for these rights' execution.

Distribute copies of the reading called "Limited or unlimited rights," and ask students to choose one conclusion of the reading. The different conclusions represent different approaches to the issue of the necessity of ensuring an equilibrium between majority and minority (individual) rights. The absence of such an equilibrium, as illustrated in examples B and C, is likely to lead to negative consequences. Ask students to justify their opinions.

Ask students for possible reactions of an individual (group) to the following situation: the social majority has come out in favor of an incorrect and harmful for the majority decision. For example, the parliament has passed legislation prohibiting tourism in the country in which approximately half the population relied on tourism for its revenues. The goal of this legislation

was to do away with long lines at the borders, however, lowering the incomes of such a huge portion of the population does not bode well for the country as a whole (a drop in national revenues and the national budget because of the drop in revenues from taxes). Write on the board three major views of the "reasonable minority" which should transpire in the course of the discussion: agreeing with the majority's decision, abolishing the decision with violence, and superficial acceptance of the decision and actual violation of the decision made by the majority.

Distribute copies of the supplementary materials #3, asking students to fill in the blanks in the chart depicting the decision making process; if necessary, elaborate on the way in which students should complete the chart.

Ask selected students to justify the three stands described in the exercise. Lead a discussion focusing on the following problem: what kind of a "price" does one have to pay for choosing one of the possible courses of action. Point students' attention to the fact that in extreme situations, relying on violence to abolish an "unjust" majority decision might in fact be beneficial. One needs to remember, however, that it is extraordinarily difficult to go back to the democratic procedures once one has successfully gotten away with violating them. Similarly, permanently sabotaging the government's decisions leads to anarchy - and not the law; nonetheless, some citizens decide on their own what is permitted and what is forbidden.

Conclusion

Start a discussion focusing on the following proposition: it is in the majority's interest to respect minority rights. Make sure students understand that the notions of "majority" or "minority" usually have a very fluid meaning. We can belong to the majority on one issue and to the minority on the other. Protecting minority rights is, then, in the interest of everybody.

Encourage students to react to the following Roman maxim: dura lex, sed lex (hard law, but law).

Concepts

* individual rights
* "majority error"
* anarchy

Supplementary materials #1

A Story about the Victory of Long Hair

In the democratic republic of Szamponia, the industry was rather poorly developed, the trade did not bring too much revenue, and the agriculture constituted a side job for many of the country's citizens. The standard of living of Szamponia's citizens', however, was very high. Why was that the case? Because in Szamponia, thanks to the kind of climate which could not be found anywhere else, thanks to the springs of special water and very clean air, people's hair grew extremely well. Crowds from all over the world, all year round would pour into Szamponia in order to improve the quality of their hair and to

increase its shine. People who had fine and thin hair since the time they were children would be buying new combs for their beautiful hair after only a few months in Szamponia. Women whose hair has lost its shine and started to break would recover the shine and beauty of their hair after only a few weeks of breathing Szamponian air and drinking Szamponian water. Men with thinning hair would be able to slow down the process by years after their visits to Szamponia. You could see TV and movie stars, models, politicians, and many other people taking leisurely walks in this famous country.

In 1955, The Party of the Radical Long-Haired Ones won the elections to parliament in Szamponia, and their leader, Agenor Wlochacz, became the country's president. The election took place at the point in time in which it turned out that fewer visitors came to Szamponia in the preceding year than before. Hotel, restaurant, and bar owners, mountain guides, shop owners, taxi drivers, etc. were figuring out their losses and out loud inquiring about the causes of the loss of interest in Szamponia. According to the Party of the Radical Long-Haired Ones the Szamponian...bald people were to blame. Strange though it may sound, about one in every ten Szamponian citizens was completely bald, despite the fact that they may have lived in Szamponia since their birth. "Their appearance - argued Agenor Wlochacz - is scaring tourists away! Their bald skulls constitute a clear contradiction of the attractiveness of our country."

The newly elected parliament, dominate by the Party of the Radical Long-Haired Ones, has therefore instituted a new tax from baldness and has forbidden the bald people from living in the regions particularly likely to be visited by tourists. When a new drop in the numbers of tourists was noted in the following year, the Parliament passed a new law which forbade the bald people to leave their houses between 6 a.mm. and 10 p.m., to frequent the local bars and restaurants, and to use trains, airplanes, and buses. The League of Thin Hair, attempting to protest these decisions, was disbanded, and its leaders arrested. The newspaper called "Bald as a Knee" was closed down as well.

All these measures, however, did not lead to any measurable increase in the incomes of the Szamponians. After a few years, Agenor Wlochacz conceded the fiasco of his and his party's policies. "We were too sensitive" - he stated in a radio interview and announced stricter measures. A few weeks later, all bald people and their families were deported from Szamponia. In a special announcement, the Radical Party of the Long-Haired Ones emphasized: "We have done everything we could have to rescue Szamponia." The Party has won in the subsequent elections as well.

Supplementary materials #2

Limited or Unlimited Rights

The rule of majority power means that the minority has to obey the decisions made by the majority. If this principle were introduced into life literally, the majority could impose various

burdens on the minority, even some completely absurd. Constitutions of democratic countries, however, usually contain a description of individual rights which cannot be abridged.

Conclusions

Conclusion A

The rights concerning human dignity, freedom of opinions, and citizenship rights cannot be abridged in these countries. They can be temporarily suspended only under extraordinary circumstances (e.g., in the times of war).

Conclusion B

Each individual right needs to be respected in these countries at all times. The majority cannot impose its views on the minority even on issues important for the society as a whole (e.g., conscription or taxes).

Conclusion C

The code of individual rights in these countries only includes the prohibition on discrimination on the basis of origin, skin color, and gender.

Supplementary materials #3

An exercise called "A clever minority in the face of the 'majority's error'"

1. Here are the choices I have:

a. acceptance, but I also conduct a political campaign to repeal the new law as soon as possible

b. repealing the decision of the majority by means of violence

c. faking acceptance and doing as I please

Remembering that the majority of political decisions have both positive and negative consequences, complete the text below.

I have chosen path A

Negative consequences:

- the bad decision is still on the books
- the society as a whole suffers from the majority's error
- campaign against the law causes the divisions in the society to come to a head

Positive consequences:

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I have chosen path B

Negative consequences:

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- a polarization of society into supporters and opponents of dictatorship surfaces

Positive consequences:

- a bad law has been repealed and the society as a whole can only benefit from this

- the majority which has made the bad decision has been, at least temporarily, removed from power and, thus, punished

I have chosen path C

Negative consequences:

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Positive consequences:

- my personal situation remains good
- due to an astute ignoring of the law on the part of many citizens, its negative consequences have been minimized

Which of the above mentioned paths do you think is the best?

UNIT III: What rights do children have?

Abstract: Everybody is entitled to various rights and freedoms, and that includes the children. The General Assembly of the United Nations Organization has ratified the Children's Rights Charter which is a document containing the basic rights of children. Poland has also ratified this charter.

Goals

After participating in this lesson students should be able to:

- list a few basic children's rights
- explain what the selected children's rights really mean
- recognize violations of children's rights
- list a few institutions (including their locations) which children can turn to if their rights are abridged

Educational aids

1. A catalogue of rights contained in The United Nations Organization Charter of Children's Rights
2. A reading developed by the authors of "Pentliczek"
3. A chart "Who Can I Turn to for Help?"

Proposed lesson plan

Introduction

Remind students the meaning of the word "charter." Point their attention to the fact that "charter" - in distinction from a declaration - makes it incumbent upon the country which has ratified it to respect the rights contained therein.

Ask students to imagine that they are United Nations counsellors and have been put in charge of developing a charter

of children's rights. Ask them what rights, in their opinion, should such a charter contain? Write the students' suggestions on the board. They can be formulated in a variety of ways, for instance:

"Nobody has a right to interfere with..."

"Children are entitled to ... from adults"

Elaboration

Distribute copies of the catalogue of children's rights contained in the Charter of Children's Rights and explain that such a document already exists. Tell students who and under what circumstances have developed this document. Bring their attention to the fact that Poland has already ratified this charter, which means that the Polish authorities are obligated to stand up for children's rights described therein. Inform students that copies of the charter they have received are not authentic copies of the Charter but rather they contain the names of the rights contained in the original document which have been elaborated on in some detail.

Give students time to familiarize themselves with the contents of the Charter. Have them compare those contents with the suggestions that you have earlier written on the board. Are all their suggestions already written into the Charter (although perhaps in a somewhat modified form)? Clarify any ambiguities with respect to any concepts.

Suggest, at this point, that the students - working individually or in pairs - elaborate on the slogans contained in

the Charter. Assign one right to each individual/pair. Write on the board an outline according to which students should perform this task.

Here is an example:

"If children have a right to relax, then, they cannot be forced to do homework for several hours every day. Children should have time to play with their friends, to read books, and to play with the dog."

A result of this exercise should be the Charter translated into children's language.

Inform students that the publishers of the children's weekly "Pentliczek" have done something similar by developing a modified version of the Charter for small children. Distribute copies of that weekly from June 1, 1993 or - if you do not have that issue - copies of supplementary materials #2. It might be a good idea to have the class (or volunteers) to prepare a brief presentation for younger students or for preschoolers.

Divide the class into 6-8 person groups. Each group will have the responsibility for writing a short story about a child whose rights in a certain life situation have been violated and, subsequently - thanks to its won attempts and/or others' help - the harm done to the child has been repaired. To make things easier you can tell each group which right's (rights') abridgment their story should focus on.

After the results of the groups' work have been presented allow other students to comment on the stories composed by their colleagues. Pay attention to the consistency between children's rights in students' stories and those contained in the Charter of Children's Rights and to the ways of standing up for children's rights that the authors of the stories chose to focus on.

Make a list, and write it on the board, of individuals and institutions who helped the children and who appeared in all the stories written by the groups. Complement this list with other, not mentioned by students, organizations, institutions, and individuals to whom children whose rights have been violated can turn. Distribute copies of the supplementary material #3 "Who Can I Turn to for Help?" and ask that students complete it with the missing addresses and phone numbers.

Conclusion

Students paint posters and write slogans endorsing children's rights. This can be a collective work - for instance, each group can draw a large poster and comes up with one slogan. Arrange an exhibit of the posters in the classroom or in the school hallway.

Concepts

* children's rights
* charter
* declaration
* ratification

Supplementary materials #1

A catalogue of rights contained in the Charter of Children's Rights

A catalogue of children's rights contained in the Charter embraces civil, social, cultural, and political rights. It does not include any economic rights because it is thought that children should study and not work.

Children's personal rights:

- right to life and development

- right to civil identity, i.e., right to being registered following birth and to having a name

- right to citizenship

- right to a family, that is, to being brought up by natural parents, and in case of separation from the parents to regular contacts with them and to permanent connections with them, if possible

- freedom of religion and opinions

- freedom of expression and of having opinions respected depending on the child's age, and in particular, children have a right to be heard in judicial and administrative proceedings in any matters that concern them (e.g., change of name, adoption)

- freedom from physical and psychological violence, being taken advantage of, being sexually abused, and from any other form of cruelty

- freedom from being sentenced to death or to life imprisonment

Children's social rights:

- right to protection of health
- right to an appropriate standard of living
- right to rest, free time, entertainment, and play

Children's cultural rights:

- right to education (primary education is mandatory and free)
- right to benefit from cultural goods
- right to information
- right to being familiar with own rights

Older children, in addition, are granted various political rights by the Charter, including right of assembly and association for peaceful purposes.

Finally, the Charter grants certain additional rights to physically or mentally handicapped children as well as those who are socially maladjusted.

Supplementary materials #2

A reading developed by the authors of "Pentliczek"

Let it be known all over the world that children are people too, although rather small. This is why scholars, who should be applauded for this, wanting to change the lot of many children, have developed wise laws for you children. Therefore, you should remember what they are, on a daily basis and on holidays too

* Nobody can force me to do anything, and particularly anything bad

* I can learn anything what I am interested in and can choose the friends who I want to play with

* Nobody can humiliate me, hurt me, hit me, call me names, and I can always call on anybody for help

* When my mom or dad do not live with us any more, no one can prevent me from seeing them from time to time

* No one is allowed to read my letters without asking me first, and I have a right to my own secrets and opinions

* I can demand that my rights be respected and when I differ from others it is my own business

This is why these poems have been composed, so that children all over the world can take advantage of their rights as best as they can.[1]

Based on The Charter of Children's Rights; developed by Michal Szymanczak, written by Marcin Brykczynski

Supplementary materials #3

Who Can I Turn to for Help?

I. Adults whom I can trust (complete yourself)

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[1] As an aside, the original is written in the form of a poem, with rhymes and all.

II. Governmental institutions

Social service centers . . . . . .

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Police . . . . . .

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Family courts . . . . . .

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National Caretaking Board . . . . . .

. . . . . .

Advocate of Human Rights . . . . . .

. . . . . .

(Write in addresses and phone numbers) . . . . . .

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III. Social organizations

The Committee for Protection of Children's Rights

00-259 Warsaw

Bolesc 2

tel. 312429

The Foundation for Children's Protection Against Cruelty

90-926 Lodz

Schillera 8, 374

tel. 331264

Complete the list by writing down below

the names of organizations active your area

Remember that you can contact these individuals or institutions on your own or you can have adults, such as teachers or aunts, contact them on your behalf.

UNIT IV: The basics of parliamentary elections and parliamentary decision making

Abstract: Whether or not a given political system is democratic partially depends on the scope of the parliament's powers (passing the most important laws, controlling the government), openness of parliamentary elections, and mechanisms of political conflict internal to the parliament. In the course of this lesson students should learn the basics of parliamentary elections and parliamentary decision making.

Goals

After participating in this lesson students should be able to:

- explain the difference the majority and proportional principles
- define the following terms: election - "general," "direct," "egalitarian," "secret"
- explain what role opposition plays in the parliament
- list the most important positions in the Sejm and the Senate

Educational aids

1. A reading (with assignments enclosed) "On Elections to the Sejm and the Senate"
2. A reading "Inside the Parliament" with a chart of the Sejm session room
3. A glossary of the most important concepts dealing with the parliament's work
4. An exercise "True or false?"

Proposed lesson plan

Introduction

Try to learn what students already know about the parliament. Is it uni- or bi-cameral? Are there parliaments in other countries as well? In what countries?

Elaboration

Distribute copies of the supplementary materials #1 called "On Elections to the Sejm and the Senate." Ask students to answer in writing the questions contained therein.

Ask several students to read and discuss their answers, and subsequently several others to write on the board the following terms: general election, egalitarian election, direct election, secret election, proportional representation, and ask them to explain what their understanding of these terms is.

Distribute copies of the supplementary materials #2 and #3. Ask one of the students to read out loud the text entitled "Inside the Parliament." When important concepts come up, interrupt the reader and ask a different student to define a given term. The glossary contained in supplementary materials #3 should be helpful at this point. Write these terms on the board.

When you have decided that students know the above-mentioned texts well, collect them back. Put forward a suggestion that students devise a crossword puzzle, that is, to write explanations to the questions which will focus on the concepts appearing on the board.

Ask students to read out loud the descriptions of the concepts they have developed for the crossword puzzle. Pay

attention to the "crossword puzzle style" which these descriptions should be characterized by. These descriptions should not just be based on students' memorizations of what they have read before but also should be the product of their creative work. Encourage students to create a real crossword puzzle from these explanations.

Analyze together with students a chart illustrating the appearance of the Sejm room. If possible, arrange the desks in the classroom in such a way that their arrangement corresponds to the Sejm room. Assign different roles to students: Sejm speaker, members, the president, the prime minister and members of the cabinet, diplomats, journalists, and take seats in the temporarily created arrangement...

Ask students to track how, on the basis of their reading of the printed news (different papers), the decision was made on some important issue, such as, the vote of lack of confidence in the government, the budget, etc. Divide the class into several-person teams which need to start working on their task by establishing which parties compose the current governmental coalition, and which are in the opposition, and then should recreate the decision making process in the Sejm. What alternatives were proposed, what were the causes of the different groupings' positions on that particular matter (each team should focus on one grouping only). Point students' attention to the fact that the publicly declared motives for political decisions do not necessarily correspond to the actual intentions. Who is

in charge of the grouping which each team focus on? Who spoke? What were the results of the vote?

Conclusion

Towards the end of the class, ask students to do the exercise called "True or false?" (supplementary materials #4) and to verify the correctness of their answers by talking to one another.

Concepts

* general election
* direct election
* secret election
* egalitarian election
* majority principle
* proportional representation principle

Comments

Tracking bills requires either prior collection of a large number of different newspapers and longer time for preparing answers in class or assigning this task as a homework assignment and discussing it during the following lesson. You can omit, alternatively, this part of the lesson, especially if you plan to have a lesson on "How are laws created?"

Supplementary materials #1

On Elections to the Sejm and the Senate

The Polish Parliament consists of two chambers: the Sejm and the Senate. The Parliament is elected in accordance with the following principles:

a. anybody who is a Polish citizen and at least 18 years of age can vote in elections to Parliament - general elections

b. each person has one equal vote - egalitarian elections

c. voting is done by secret ballot (no one can know who a particular voter is voting for) - secret elections

d. each person votes directly for candidates running for seats in parliament - direct elections

Any individual, political party, or labor union can nominate candidates for parliament. The number of candidates is not preset and cannot be limited by anyone.

460 members of Sejm are chosen to the Sejm from the whole country (and 100 senators to the Senate), but particular members or senators are chosen in the so-called electoral districts. These districts are regions composed of towns and cities in which people vote for their representatives.

Two major translation mechanisms of votes into seats exist which affect the final composition of the Parliament.

The first - called the majority principle - means that each district elects one representative. Whether or not one of the candidates running for election does in fact get elected is contingent on who got the most votes. Let us imagine that 4 candidates are vying for election. Candidate representing party

A got 40% of the final vote, that of party B - 30%, that of party C - 20%, and that of party D - 10%. According to the law, the candidate representing party A will become elected. Under such a system, all inhabitants of a particular district are represented by only one representative - one who got the most votes at election time.

The second principle - called proportional representation - requires that the country be divided into larger electoral districts so that voters can choose several representatives. Let us imagine that our district elects 10 members of parliament. Each party has nominated 10 candidates. The outcomes of voting were the same as in the above example. However, according to the proportionality principle, party A would get 4 seats, party B - 3, party C - 2, and party D - 1. As is apparent, each party would be represented in proportion to the number of the votes it got.

The principles underlying elections to parliament are called electoral law.

An assignment

You have just learnt about 2 ways of electing members of parliament. Which of the two

a. makes for a stronger connection between the representative and the represented?

b. is more conducive to representing minorities in parliament?

c. makes it more difficult for members of a large number of small parties to get elected to parliament?

Supplementary materials #2

Inside the Parliament

Members of parliament belonging to the same political party form the so-called parliamentary club within the parliament. The clubs can be divided into those which support the government's (cabinet's?) program and those which criticize or fight it. The cabinet can only carry out its program if it is supported by the majority of the members of parliament. The clubs supporting the cabinet's politics form a governmental coalition and the remaining ones form a parliamentary opposition. Opposition does not have to agree on a single program, the only thing which binds it is its negative attitude towards the cabinet.

There is also a tradition of dividing the clubs into the right, the center, and the left. This custom originated in England where, during the revolution (in the XVIIth century) the king's supporters took seats on the right, and his opponents on the left side of the parliament's room. The meaning of these concepts is fluid and has been changing throughout history; in the parliament of the IIIrd Polish Republic (1991-1993) the Christian-National Association (ZCN) was the largest political party on the right, the center was occupied by the Democratic Union, and the left by the Supporter of the Democratic Left (SLD). The right, the center, and the left differ in their views on the principles of political and economic systems, and have

different preferences as far as the priorities of the government are concerned.

The main tasks of the Polish parliament are:

- passing laws
- supporting and controlling the cabinet (government?)

In its activities, the Polish parliament is based on the principle that each decision made has to have been based on prior discussion which every member of parliament had a right to participate in. All sorts of views, both pro and con, can be presented in this discussion on the proposed law, both convenient and inconvenient for the cabinet. Such a way of resolving conflicting opinions can take up a lot of time, and debates in the Sejm often have a very conflictual character. This facilitates, however, finding the best solutions to the problems at hand, minimizes accidental decisions, and convinces the greatest number of citizens.

All discussions in the Sejm and decisions made by it are public; in some extraordinary circumstances, for the sake of the country's well-being, the Sejm can vote in favor of closing debate to the public.

Supplementary materials #3

Glossary of the most important terms concerning parliamentary work

Debate - discussion in parliament .

Immunity - a privilege of senators and members of the Sejm which protects them from arrest, detention, or being held responsible without the agreement of the Senate or the Sejm; it prevents, at the same time, the arbitrary use of power by the executive branch

Interpolation - a question, asked by a Sejm member or a senator to the prime minister or other minister which needs to be answered by an appropriate representative of the Cabinet during a given time period

Term - the period of time for which Sejm members and senators get elected, in Poland it is for four years; in some special circumstances, described in the constitution, the term of the parliament can be shortened

Sejm committee - a group of Sejm members specializing in some area which reviews bills in that area; for example, budget committee, foreign affairs committee, or judicial affairs

The seniors' club - a group within the Sejm composed of chairs of all the parliament clubs; it ensures cooperation of clubs on issues connected with the Sejm's work

Speaker of the House (President of the Senate) - a member chosen by the Sejm (Senate) to preside over debates

Veto - an objection of the president with respect to a bill; it becomes a law, however, if it comes up for the parliament vote again and at least 2/3 of members of parliament vote for it

Vote of no confidence - a resolution by which the Sejm demands that the Cabinet or one of the ministers resign

Supplementary materials #4

An exercise called "True or false?"

What you find below is correct and incorrect principles inherent in Polish parliamentary elections. Indicate which ones are true:

a. each voter has only one vote

b. all adult citizens are allowed to vote

c. public officials get to vote without waiting in line

d. all people vote in person for candidates running for parliament

e. a voter who pays more taxes than an average Pole can cast 2 votes

f. voters choose delegates who then vote for Sejm members and senators

g. a voter has to inform the electoral commission who (s)he has voted for

h. people who fail to vote can be punished by losing their passports

i. voting is secret

j. only those people who graduated primary school can vote

UNIT V: Should we vote in elections?

Abstract: Voting in elections in a democratic society constitutes the most important civic activity, and one way to fulfill the ideal of popular rule. Every citizen casting a vote in elections influences the future shape of the nation, and at the same time, his/her own life. People do not always realize the significance of this act and, therefore, do not vote. What kinds of consequences can nonvoting have?

Goals

After participating in this lesson students should be able to:

- explain why it is in people's interest to vote in elections
- enumerate the types of public officials who are elected by citizens
- indicate who can vote and how voting is done

Educational aids

1. A selection from the constitutional law #9 from October 17, 1992 concerning the principles underlying elections to the Sejm and the Senate as well as to the Presidency
2. Instructions for participation in the simulation

Proposed lesson plan

Introduction

Ask students how governments are chosen in democratic societies. If they answer this question correctly, point their attention to the fact that in 1989, 1991, and 1993 elections to the Sejm only 40 to 50% of the people eligible to vote actually voted, and in the presidential election (in 1990) only approximately 60% of the eligible voted. Many Poles believe that

there is no point to voting as their participation in elections is not going to change anything. Explain that you want to convince those students who agree with this view even partially that it is based on fallacious reasoning.

Elaboration

Distribute copies of supplementary materials #1 (a selection from the constitutional statute #9 from October 17, 1992 concerning the principles underlying elections to the Sejm and the Senate and to the Presidency) and ask students to read them. Answer any questions that might surface. Ask whether students understand the difference between the right to vote and the possibility of being elected. Explain that the right to vote is usually referred to as the "active electoral right" and the possibility of being elected the "passive electoral right." Ask students to answer the following question on the basis of their reading of the assigned selections: "Are there more Poles who have an active electoral right or those who have a passive electoral right?"

Inform students that they will participate in a game at this point. The class will elect the person who will be its representative in students' dealings with the school's authorities and who will have a wide scope of powers. Make sure to state clearly that this is only a game!

Draw two faces on the board, call one of them X and the other Y. List the main points on X's and Y'x agendas under the drawings. Here they are:

X (a sad face)	Y (a happy face)
prohibition of wearing jeans on moral grounds	prohibition on unsatisfactory grades because of the students' welfare
prohibition on dances on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays because they take up valuable time which students could devote to their studies	doing away with entrance exams to high schools
making it mandatory for students to wear hats with a school logo in winter because of health concerns	making it mandatory for the school to install satellite TV in all classrooms and to organize school dances each Friday

(X's and Y's electoral programs are only tentative. In order for the purpose of this lesson to be accomplished in accordance with its intent, Y's program should be catered to students' preferences.)

Ask students to write down on pieces of paper who they would vote for under such circumstances. Collect the "ballots" once students have written down their choices.

Divide the class into four teams called A, B, C, and D. Give each team a copy of previously prepared sheet with voting instructions (supplementary materials #2). Team A should get sheet A, team B sheet B, and so on. (Note: There are two types of Sheet D - one quarter of all students should get sheet D, however, make sure that 75% of students out of this group receive copies of sheet D-1 and the remaining 25% copies of sheet D-2. For example, if there are 8 people in group D, 5 should get copies of D-1 and three of D-2).

Ask students not to tell anyone how they have voted.

Conduct an "election" by collecting the pieces of paper from students. After all the votes have been counted it will turn out that 2-3 people voted for candidate Y, and 5-6 people for candidate X. In other words, candidate X will have won. Read out loud the proposals of the winner which will now be put into life.

Explain as well, revealing what was written on different "ballots" (75% of the class failed to vote at all for various reasons). Count the votes from the earlier held voting. Inform the class what the outcome would be if everybody had voted.

Ask students what the reasons were for their nonvoting. Are there any other reasons for which people do not vote in elections?

Conclusion

Pose the following questions (or whichever one you choose):

* Do you agree with the following statement: "When you do not vote, in reality you do vote?"

* What can happen if only a handful of Poles turn out at the polls in the upcoming election?

Concepts

* election
* electoral law
* passive electoral right
* active electoral right

* ballot box

Supplementary materials #1

Selections from the constitutional statute #9 from October 17, 1992 -

Principles underlying elections to the Sejm, the Senate, and the Presidency

Article 95 - Any person who is at least 18 years of age has a right to vote, regardless of their gender, national or racial origin, religious preference, education, length of residency, social origins, occupation, and income.

Article 96 - Any person who is at least 21 years old and who has been residing in Poland continuously for at least 5 years can be elected to the Sejm and Senate.

Article 97 - Women have the same electoral rights as men do.

Article 98 - Military personnel have the same electoral rights as non-military personnel.

Article 99 - People who have been declared by the courts as mentally incapacitated as well as those whose public or electoral rights have been suspended cannot vote.

Article 100 - Social and political organizations as well as individual voters can nominate candidates to the Sejm, the Senate, and the Presidency.

Article 101 - Sejm members and Senators should report on their activities to the people who have elected them.

Article 102 - Statutes define the manner in which candidates to the Sejm, the Senate, and the Presidency can be nominated, and the manner in which all these elections will be conducted.

Supplementary materials #2

Instructions for participants in the simulation game

Group A

You do not vote in this election. It is raining outside and you do not feel like leaving the house. Actually, even if it did not rain, you would not feel like voting as, after all, voting is such a big effort!

Group B

You do not vote in this election. You believe that your vote will not count anyway. So many other people get to vote, after all, that what can your single vote change?!

Group C

You do not vote in this election. You cannot decide which candidate to support; and, frankly, you do not care about this election at all. It makes no difference to you who gets elected.

Group D - version 1

You vote for Candidate X in this election. You like his/her electoral program and the changes he/she is suggesting.

Group D - version 2

You vote for Candidate Y in this election. You like his/her electoral program and the changes he/she has put forward.

UNIT VI: <u>On production and distribution - what, how, and for whom?</u>

Abstract: Scarcity of goods, services, and raw capital make it necessary for the society to confront the basic question of what, how, and for whom to produce.

Goals

After participating in this lesson students should be able to:

- give examples of the processes of production and distribution
- make group decisions concerning production and division of goods and services
- explain why each society experiences difficulties with the manners of production and distribution
- evaluate positive and negative sides of functioning of different economic systems

Educational aids

1. An exercise called "What and how to produce?"
2. An exercise called "How to divide the produced goods?"
3. An exercise called "Economic systems"

Each student should also get 1-2 things such as: glue, scissors, staplers, paints, pieces of cardboard, pieces of paper, or pieces of paper symbolizing money

Proposed lesson plan

<u>Introduction</u>

Begin by reminding students the concepts of natural, human, and capital resources. Check to make sure that they have a good

grasp of these terms - list a few goods and services and ask what kinds of factors were used to produce them.

Distribute the materials you have prepared in advance - pieces of cardboard, paper, paints, pencils, scissors, glue, etc. Distribute these in a random fashion and in such a way that no student gets more than two things, and that each students gets at least one kind of paper. Make students realize that they have now become owners of various production factors.

Divide the class into 4-5 groups. Inform students that each group now forms a society whose task it is to produce some good. Because of the arbitrary fashion in which the materials were distributed before and unequal distribution of goods, each group will have to decide first what and how to produce.

Distribute copies of the supplementary materials #1 ("What and how to produce?"). Formulating the answers should make it easier to make appropriate decisions. Assist those groups which may require your help, suggest ideas but indicate clearly that groups should not communicate with one another unless they only want to find out what things the other groups have in their possession.

Allow between 10 and 20 minutes for the "production process." Encourage students to look for the goods they need. Remind the groups that they have some "money" and that they can borrow or exchange different materials. Keep them abreast of the passage of time.

Ask group representatives to present the things their groups have made and to talk about the difficulties they encountered in deciding what things to produce and in the "production process" itself. The remnants of materials that have not been used, the remaining "money" and the groups' productions should be held on to for a later part of the lesson.

Point to students' attention the fact that during the first part of the game they were solving the basic economic problem - they were collectively answering the question of what and how to produce having only limited resources at one's disposal. Have students perform another task: have them divide the goods they have produced among the members of their "society." Introduce the concept of "distribution."

Give each group a copy of the supplementary materials #2 ("How to divide the produced goods?"). Ask students to discuss the problem and to make a decision with respect to how to distribute the goods produced. If students should encounter any difficulties, suggest a few solutions (for example, the goods can be given to: everybody, only those who put in the largest amount of work into their production, owners of the most capital or "money," the tallest person in the group should get everything, etc.). Remind students that every group member has a right to suggest how the goods should be divided.

Ask group representatives to present, on behalf of their "societies," the decision they have made and to justify it. Have students talk about the kinds of difficulties they encountered

when trying to make a decision. It can happen that some groups will not have arrived at a decision at all. Their experience will be very valuable from an educational point of view as well - have those groups report on what has happened in their groups.

Write on the board the manners in which goods were divided in different groups and pose the following questions:

* Which of the ways of dividing the goods is most fair and why? Which is the least fair and why?

* In which group - if the game were replayed - would it be most worthwhile to work and why? In which group, what its members receive is not contingent on the amount of work they invest into production?

Explain that each society constantly has to grapple with these kinds of problems. How goods and services are to be distributed can be decided by the central authority only as, for example, used to be the case in Poland and other communist countries. Economic systems of most countries in the world are based on the principles of the free market.

Divide the class into 3 groups and give each group a copy of the text focusing on one of the three economic systems (supplementary materials #3). After doing the reading, each group should present "its own" system by, among other things, answering the following questions:

* what kind of an economic system was discussed in the reading?

* what benefits come as part and parcel of this system?

* what are some of the negative consequences of this system's functioning?

Next, students should be asked to think about historical and contemporary examples of countries in which each of the above-mentioned systems is dominant.

Point students' attention to the fact that in the real world there are no ideal types of completely traditional economies, nor free market economies, nor centralized economies. In all of the so-called free market economies, governments take an active part in controlling economic activity and in redistributive policies or in the division of the national product. In communist parties, on the other hand, in which economies were centrally controlled private ownership was not totally eliminated either.

Pose the following question: "What kind of an economic model is currently being put into place in Poland?" Encourage a discussion on that subject.

Conclusion

Lead a discussion on the subject of the advantages and disadvantages of economic systems covered in the lesson.

Concepts

* resources
* production
* distribution
* economic system
* traditional economy

b. who and how makes the decision?

Present and account for your decisions.

Supplementary materials #3

An exercise called "Economic systems"

Read the text below and try to prepare answers to the following questions:

a. what kinds of economic systems have been discussed?

b. what benefits do they bring to people?

c. what negative consequences are associated with them?

Remember that the models of economic systems have been presented in a very simplified fashion. The "reality" is much more complicated, and economic systems in most countries are of mixed character.

Each society has to organize production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services, or to create an economic system.

Model A

In a traditional economy, the knowledge about production methods is transmitted from one generation to another. Older generations teach their children how to take care of the soil and the livestock, how to hunt, and make the necessary objects. All these activities are based on models several centuries old , and the society does not change its ways, but rather acts in accordance with the traditions inherent in the community. The resources such as property or tools are usually owned by individuals or families who decide how these things will be used.

Similarly, decisions concerning the division of goods within the family or the tribe are rooted in the tradition. Such a system is in place in many African, Asian, and South American cultures. It has its shortcomings, however - not a lot of change takes place in the process of production over centuries, productiveness is almost always the same, and economic growth is hampered to a substantial degree.

Model B

In a centrally operated economy, all decisions are made by the central government. Governmental officials define what goods and services should be produced, in what amounts and in what ways, how much different goods should cost, and who will decide how the profits from production will be used. Most of the resources - factories, soil, tools, and other equipment - are owned by the state. The state controls the process of production and distribution of goods and services, oversees the transport and communication and banks, determines the number of job openings and the wages to be paid. Supporters of this type of an economy have always claimed that the goal of the system is to ensure equitable and fair distribution of goods, narrowing the gap between the rich and the poor, and eliminating poverty. Central planning was to ensure harmonious development of the whole economy. The reality has turnout out to be quite different.

Model C

In a free market economy, production resources are owned privately. Individual and businesses independently make decisions concerning purchases, sales, and investments. People decide on their own how to use the resources they have and what kind of work they want to do. Consumers can - out of many products offered on the market - choose any good or service they need. Producers - in order to maximize their profits - have to compete with one another and to minimize production costs so that the goods and services they can offer are as inexpensive as they can be and be of highest quality possible. The state has less influence on economic processes, although in countries with market economies the government can interfere with the process of production or distribution of goods and the development of social services to a larger or lesser extent.

Such a system, affecting economic development, is, however, the source of social and income inequities, and gives rise to many problems such as unemployment or overproduction of goods and services.